

SECRET
PROGRESS IN VIETNAM

INTRODUCTION:

The President has asked me to discuss with you some of the intelligence underpinning to his remarks on the state of the war in his speech last Friday night. As you will remember, his message was that we are making steady progress, but the struggle remains hard. I want to explain how we are able to perceive this steady progress.

I. First, a few of the statistical measures with which you may already be familiar.

- A. The number of enemy killed has steadily risen (Chart).
- B. The number of hostile acts initiated by the enemy has fallen (Chart).
- C. The number of enemy deserters who turn themselves in to the government is much higher this year than last (Chart).
- D. Moreover, the trend in the enemy's fortunes depicted in these charts is consistent with a mass of nonquantifiable intelligence evidence--such as captured documents and prisoner-of-war interrogations.

II. You will note that I have not cited the figures comparing South Vietnamese weapons losses with those of the enemy. These too are favorable, but we have come to believe they are no longer meaningful.

- A. The enemy main forces are now largely using the Soviet and Chinese 7.62-mm. weapons family.
- B. They no longer have to equip themselves with captured weapons, and their regular ammunition wouldn't fit these weapons anyway.
- C. Thus there is little pressure on them to raid South Vietnamese arsenals.

III. More basic than any of these statistics, however--and hardest of all to measure--has been "population control"--what proportion of the South Vietnamese people is responsive to the government in Saigon and what proportion is responsive to the Viet Cong? And, more important yet, how is this proportion changing from month to month?

- A. Most of the statistics being reported regularly from Saigon are firm.
 - 1. They measure the magnitude of our effort, in terms of casualties, schools built, bridges repaired, and fertilizer distributed.

2. However, few of these statistics really reflect the net impact of that effort-- favorable or unfavorable.

B. Furthermore, those statistics available on population control have up till now been derived from questionable data and based on subjective judgments.

IV. Last fall, at Secretary McNamara's request, we developed a new evaluation concept.

A. This new system is my main subject today.
B. It was put into operation in the field beginning in January of this year.
C. Since then, this new, computerized technique has shaken down.

1. With the computation of data for August we now feel that we have a reasonably reliable and meaningful measure of progress on a hamlet-by-hamlet basis.

2. Ambassador Bunker shares this view.

V. The new "Hamlet Evaluation System" is based on detailed monthly reports of changes in the status of every one of some 12-13,000-odd hamlets as seen through the eyes of General Westmoreland's district military advisers, who are closest to the cutting edge.

- A. These advisers evaluate each hamlet in terms of the six factors shown on this form.
- B. In making his evaluation, the adviser selects for each hamlet and for each of a number of indicators.
- C. In judging an individual hamlet, the adviser is required to ask himself a series of questions about each element which goes into making a hamlet engaged on the government side.
 - 1. I have blown up one line of the form to show the process.
 - 2. The adviser must select the description which best fits each element of the total pacification package.
 - 3. They range from A (excellent) through E (very poor).
- D. These forms are sent each month to Saigon for machine processing.
 - 1. The computers digest this raw data, and then produce a variety of displays which demonstrate the status of the pacification effort.
 - 2. The machine can compute the average grade for all 18 indicators for each hamlet, and

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tabulate these on a village-by-village,
district-by-district, and province-by-
province basis.

3. Each hamlet receives an over-all grade from A through E.
4. Hamlets unable to make the E grade are characterized as Viet Cong - controlled.

VI. In determining who controls what proportion of the population, we draw the line at "C" hamlets. That is, A, B and C hamlets are considered government-controlled. D and E are classed as contested, and of course the remainder are Viet Cong.

A. To illustrate how our criteria work, let me describe this crucial "C" hamlet.

1. In a C hamlet VC military control has been broken, nearby VC units have been reduced by up to 50 percent, and no overt Viet Cong activity has occurred in the hamlet during the past month.
2. Defensive communications are operative, friendly military forces meet requirements, and local intelligence assets are beginning to function.
3. Administrative elements are functioning and usually remain overnight.

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4. Information programs are under way; medical support is available from external resources.
5. Limited formal educational programs are under way.
6. People are participating in self-help projects, and economic development plans are being implemented.
7. In sum, the hamlet is relatively secure and government influence is dominant.

VII. The computer can plot these grades on a map. I will not show you one because a map with 13,000 different-colored dots on it looks like a bad case of chicken pox.

- A. Such a map is far more meaningful to the expert, however, than those resulting from previous efforts which depicted area control, since the ultimate target of both sides in this war is people, and not just terrain.
- B. With this type of display, we can henceforth analyze the impact of Viet Cong and friendly military operations from month to month on the pacification effort.
- C. The system thus provides a management tool not only for measuring progress in pacification,

but also for trouble-shooting the program.

1. For example, the system has already enabled us to develop far more complete and accurate population data than any previously available.
2. Some 1,500 hamlets not included in the government's former population control statistics have been identified.

VIII. With this system we can now compute where we presently stand in population control, and we will in the future be able to record with considerably greater accuracy our progress.

- A. This chart shows our first firm results in the data for August, which give a proportional breakdown of the total population. To the population of A, B and C hamlets, which we consider responsive to the government, we add the population of the cities where the government's control is clearly established.
- B. This gives the 68 percent figure used in the President's speech.
- C. The D and E, or contested, category adds up to about 15 percent of the population, and the Viet Cong - controlled to about 17.

IX. The next chart compares the August data under the new system with the historical trend reflected in markedly less reliable GVN data. I should add that this trend is also apparent in the voter registration and turnout figures for the last three major elections.

A. One word of caution.

1. We are confident that the new system is a great improvement, but like all statistics on this war, it has its weaknesses.
2. It is more systematic, more detailed and more objective than earlier systems, but it still depends in the end on the judgment of the district adviser.

B. Given this qualification, and allowing for the lower reliability of earlier data, it remains clear that there has been an upward trend in the government's control of the population.

1. I should stress that this is not just a gross measure of how we are doing.
2. It has great military significance.
3. For each hamlet we deny to the enemy means that many fewer recruits he can draw from the South.

4. As his recruiting pool dries up, his units become weaker, and less capable of maintaining his hold on the people he still controls.
- X. All these signs are to the good, but as the President warned, a long hard struggle lies ahead. The captured documents make it clear that the Communists are also aware of these trends and have had to make at least two important changes in tactics to meet this threat.
 - A. First, they recognized the threat posed to them by our Revolutionary Development program.
 1. They made the program, and specifically the Revolutionary Development teams themselves, a primary target.
 2. We are just beginning to feel the results of this attack.
 3. The program is not moving as fast as we had hoped, and the casualty and desertion rate for the teams is rising.
 - B. Second, the Communists recognized that they were being badly hurt by allied military operations in many parts of the country, and decided on an effort to relieve the pressure by

opening a new area of major operations in the north.

1. In this, too, they have had some success.
2. They have drawn some of our forces north, thus slowing the pace of our offensives in the south.
3. Operating from sanctuary behind the Demilitarized Zone, they have brought pacification to a standstill in the northernmost provinces.

4. And, I need hardly tell you that the Marines in that area are engaged in a bloody battle of attrition.

C. On the other hand, Communist plans to take the offensive farther south from their bases in the Western Highlands seem to have failed.

1. They have not regained the fertile rice plains along the coast.
2. And our pacification program there continues to make progress.

D. In sum, Hanoi's transfer of the weight of its effort to the north has so far complicated our military problems and slowed down our programs. The Communist Main Force remains

strong and still poses a threat to pacification programs almost everywhere in the country.

E. One final point: In spite of what we have accomplished in the past two years, there is, as the President said, no sign of give whatsoever from Hanoi.